

July 14, 2010

**WASHINGTON, DC** - Today, U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (NY-24) voted to reduce waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars by cutting out improper and excessive payments from federal agency spending. *The Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act* will help identify, reduce and eliminate improper payments, as well as recover lost funds that federal agencies have spent improperly.

"During these tough economic times, American families have been forced to cut back and be more responsible with the way they spend their money, the federal government shouldn't be any different," **said Arcuri**. "This bill will crack down on the waste of taxpayer dollars by helping identify and eliminate improper payments by federal agencies-a critical step towards balancing the federal budget and getting our country back on track."

Federal agencies spent \$98 billion of taxpayer funds on improper payments in 2009, according to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). That is more than double the total budget for the Department of Homeland Security. This legislation includes provisions to increase transparency, prevent improper payments, recover overpayments, and hold federal agencies accountable.

The bill will require agencies to develop and report on action plans to avoid future wasteful spending. It will lower the threshold for reporting improper payments, increase audits to hold agencies accountable, and make top agency managers responsible for reducing improper payments.

**Arcuri added**, "This is about forcing the federal government to be more responsible with taxpayer dollars. In this economy, we all need to be more conscious of our spending and tightening our financial belts."

Arcuri has continually fought to cut federal spending and restore fiscal discipline to Washington. Most recently, Arcuri successfully blocked a \$1,600 pay raise for Members of Congress next year and has worked to end the automatic pay raise each year since taking office. Last year, Arcuri cosponsored *the Stop the Congressional Pay Raise Act for FY 2010* and voted to successfully block the FY 2010 pay raise saving taxpayers approximately \$2.5 million.

Arcuri has also introduced *the Congressional Belt Tightening Act* which would cut salaries for Members of Congress and their office budgets by 5 percent next year, Arcuri led by example and voluntarily cut his own office's budget by 8 percent, returning over \$120,000 to the U.S. Treasury in 2009 for Federal budget deficit reduction.

Additionally this year, Arcuri sent a letter calling on President Obama to put a freeze on all non-defense discretionary funding in the President's FY 2011 budget proposal to Congress, and led debate and voted for "Pay-Go" legislation, which was signed into law by the President in February, that requires Congress and the President to account for increases in federal spending by requiring offsets or ways to generate needed revenue.

The Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act is nearly identical to the companion House bill (H.R. 3393) passed by the House on April 28, 2010. With Arcuri's support, this bill was passed today by a vote of 414-18 and will now be sent to the President's desk for his signature.

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